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Compete Caribbean recently staged its first ever Caribbean Mediathon in Barbados.

The 2-day event which ran from November 22-23, was geared towards Caribbean journalists, communicators, designers and media students. Professionals from Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and St. Kitts, were asked to propose ideas and co-create media projects.

On the first day experts from Latin America and the Caribbean led discussions on the focal theme of Technology, Science and Innovation (TSI), citing the opportunities and challenges surrounding the TSI industry, and facilitating questions from participants.

Director of Opinno México, and publisher of the Spanish editions of MIT Technology Review and Harvard Business Review, Javier Iglesias, scientific journalist and editor-in-Chief of the Spanish Edition of the MIT Technology Review, Marta Del Amo, and scientist and award-winning journalist, Luis Quevedo, shared their thoughts and research on the relationship between TSI and the media.

Barbadian Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at MIT, Cardinal Warde, lamented the low priority given to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in college students' career choices, and the lack of science journalists in the Caribbean.

"In the Caribbean, what I've found is that it's difficult to get the word out about anything relating to science and technology, and even more difficult for the Caribbean Science Foundation to get recognised and be known," he said, "I believe that you as journalists have a very important role to play if you are going to help the region advance itself using Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths as a pillar for economic development in the region."

Speaking of the opportunities and challenges for the building of a TSI media ecosystem, Secretary General of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, Sonia Gill, said over the past few years there had been an increase in the influx of e-waste, with many of it coming from media technology and equipment.

She added that the risks of the media not building a joint venture with TSI could prove futile for its existence and progression.

“The risks are very high. Media will risk being left behind by new approaches,” she noted, “For us in the Caribbean we’re very proud that our media sector began as a development tool, and we have since advanced. But we are not going to see the sustenance of those advances if we’re not linking the media sector with the TSI sector.”

Luisa Massarani, current director of Sci-Dev, the network for science and technology communication in Latin America and the Caribbean, told participants that while her company was interested in covering Caribbean science and technology development, it was not always easy.

She noted that with science communication, while many mass media outlets had science programmes, they were not communicating science in a way that was realistic and relatable. She lamented the fact that they did not cover the Caribbean and Latin America region as much as they should.

“Usually the science that is covered is about Europe, United States, but not our countries,” she said. She added that scientists were usually portrayed as “crazy” or a “nerd” but there was a need for the training of science journalists in the region so that they can report the stories in a more realistic and relatable way.

Participants were later grouped, and challenged to come up with an innovate idea which they would develop and discuss before a panel of judges the following day.

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